

I believe these woods are in Caernarvon sh. about 3 miles west of St. Clare  
West of Gwrotheren (Caernarvon sh.) is supposed by Ptolemy who  
opposes Nennius to be Vortigern's valley, the place of security of this profligate  
monarch: on the East is Trec' Caeri or the town of the fortresses the most artful  
perfect & magnificent British post, near it is Mael Garn Gwuch a conic  
hill with a prodigious heap of stones on its summit call'd Arffedaged y  
Goures or "the apron full of stones flung down by the giants" the number  
of fortresses make it probable this country was the retreat of multitudes of  
the Britons from the fury of the Saxons.

Mona or Anglesea was the  
ancient seat of the Druids it was invaded by Suetonius Paulinus when  
Tacitus relates "on the shore stood a motley army in close array & women  
"intermix'd with men dress'd like friars in a funeral habit their  
"hair dishevell'd bearing torches the Druids uttering execrations &  
"lifting their hands to heaven" it was reduced under the Roman yoke  
by Agricola. Upon the decline of the Roman Empire people from  
Ireland crept in here. It was the residence of the princes of N. Wales  
for 4 Centuries from Aneurawd to Llewelyn. There is a tradition among  
the vulgar that before Christianity the Irish possess'd this Island.

Of the snake stones, charms or amulets of the Druids Pliny gives some  
account "Snakes in Summer roll themselves together in a trappa"  
"with the saliva of their mouths & froth of their bodies make the"  
"Anguinum or snakes egg. The Druids say this by their hissing"  
"is born up into the air & must be caught in a mantle before"  
"it reaches the earth, the person who catches it must escape or"  
"pursue back for the snakes will pursue him till they are stop'd"  
"by a river. The proof of it is if it float against the stream even"  
"when set in gold: it must be caught in a certain period of the Moon"

Pliny saw one the size of a small apple with a cartilaginous crust  
like the claws of the arms of the Polypus it gives success in law suits  
& in audiences of princes. Pliny continues "I am well assured a Roman"  
"knight among the Voluntarii was put to death by Claudius merely"  
"for having one in his bosom at a trial" (Hist. Ang. 41)

The name which extinguishes all others in Wales is that  
of Arthur prince of the Silures in the South, & elective King or General  
of the Nation: Gibbon relies most on Nennius but the fame of his exploits  
depend more upon the Welch Bard Myrddin Emoroch & Taliesin:  
he defeated the Angles of the north & Saxons of the west in twelve  
battles; his romance was the subject of Geoffrey of Monmouth wherein  
a Phrygian colony from the Tiber to the Thames was ingrafted on the  
"fable of the Aeneid" the ancestors of Arthur derived their origin from  
Troy & claimed alliance with the Caesars hence the fiction of the  
Knights of the round table, the tales of Sir Lancelot & Sir Tristram,  
the Dragons, & the Talismans, which buried in oblivion all the elegancies  
& all the achievements of antiquity. Gibbon after speaking of the  
complete revolution of the country on the inroad of the Saxons insinuates  
that the barbarity of the inhabitants of Britain the arts of Rome were  
less deeply rooted here than in Gaul or Spain; he speaks with some  
disrespect of authorities much used in this letter "The declamations  
"of Gildas the fragments or fables of Nennius the obscure hints of the"



Reveries the disciple of Claudius writes "In the 4<sup>th</sup> world" (ie between building the Temple & the Babylonish Captivity) "The Scythians settled in Ireland".

The Scottish historians contend with great zeal their origin is from Spain yet in this case they may be of Scythian extraction for the Scythians were in Spain & by Silius Italicus we learn they built Susana a City of Spain.

The Germans were call'd Scythians we know from Pliny & Seneca they penetrated into Spain. "The ~~Pyrenean~~ Pyrenean Mountains have not kept out the Germans" Seneca says who was a Spaniard.

Symphony. Lloyd observes the name Scot does not occur before the time of Constantine the great - Buchanan

dates it in Caesars time but with more zeal than truth: The opinion of some that the name & kingdom of the Scots subsisted several ages before Christ wants foundation.

Remark Giraldus "When the great Mell" (at the decline of the Roman Empire) "was monarch of Ireland six sons of" "Mured King of Ulster possessed the northern parts of Britain" "the people descended from them & particularised by the name" "of Scotia inhabit that corner to this day". Some suppose

about this time Reuda (mentioned by Bede) possessed himself of the part north of the Clyde, also Simon Breck (q. d. freckley skin) who the Scots consider as the founder of their nation flourished at this period.

Symmachus (Consul fl. A.D. 391) says of the canine species "Seven Scottish Dogs on the day of the sports were beheld with as much astonishment as if they had been brought over in Iron Cages."

"Tho' the Scots harassed Britain yet" says Bede "for nearly 120 years they did not dare to lift up their head against y<sup>e</sup> petty Princes of Northumb."

"until on one occasion they arose in a mass." The Lowlanders are anglo-Saxons & speak English the Highlanders are Scots & speak Irish.

St Jerome says when he was a young man (in the reign of Julia n) he saw in Gaul the Attacotti a British people feeding on human flesh & when they met with herds of swine Cattle or sheep in y<sup>e</sup> woods they cut slices out of the buttocks of the fat ones & cut off the dugs of the females reckoning them dainty meat.

Speaking of the customs of nations he says "Scotorum natio uxores proprias non habet."

The renowned magician Merlin on whose predictions whose art the fate of Countries depended fl. A.D. 480 the British writers call him Merdhir Emrys.

The first historian who mentions him is Reeves he says nothing of his Diabolical origin but that his mother was a nun & that the boy confessed to King Vortigern his father was a Roman.

All our Montish writers make him either a Prophet or a magician Lloyd represents him as a man of great learning & skill in mathematics.

They shew a grave call'd Merlins about a mile from Carmarthen & near it a spring or small lake - to this cave Spenser alludes but places it elsewhere (among the Hills of Dinevawr

"It is a hedious cave like bay" "From the swift Barmy bubbling down apace" "In a rock that lies a little space" "Amongst y<sup>e</sup> woody hills of Dinevawr"

\* Camden has it freckley skin but I presume it was Breck



the latter gave their name to the part of Gaul they occupied  
hence I Scaliger "Vicit Armonicas animosa Britannia gentes"  
"Et dedit imposito nomina prisca iugo"

Welsh & Cornish Britons.

The princes in Britain at this time were (i.e. 5<sup>th</sup> Century)  
Constantinus among the Damnonii a murderer & adulterer  
Aurelius Conanus of the same character

Vortipore tyrant of the Dimetæ "like a leopard in manners & as much  
spotted with crimes"

Cuneglas "the Yellow Butcher" "fighting against God with crimes & against  
man with arms"

Maglocunus "the Island Dragon" "more extravagant in his crimes  
more potent in his arms above all the Princes  
of Britain in sway"

These princes according to Gildas lived at the same time their  
writers have placed them in succession. Welsh is from Walsh  
a name the Saxons give to every thing foreign whence also  
Walloon in the low Countries Wallachians on the Danube.

From the stupendous work of Offa's ditch <sup>it seems</sup> the Britowall had been  
extremely troublesome to the Saxons, Offa reigned the latter half  
of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century.

Picts & Scots.

The Venerable Monk Bede (who died AD 735) says "It happened that  
"the Picts came as they report from Scythia in a few long ships to"  
"Ireland after soliciting in vain a settlement among the Britons"  
"they came to England as many think AD 78."

The Picts were divided into two nations Decalidonii

Victariones

were these

Picts the same as the Britons? Martial says

"Quinti Caledonios Ovidi visure Britannos"

"Ovid my friend who soon designs to see"

"The Caledonian Britons"

The fabulous origin of the Scots is from Scota the pretended Daughter  
of Pharaoh. Another more modern guess is that they are from

the Greeks from the word σκωτιοι (skotioi) & obscure  
When did Eudore learn the Scots were so called from their painted  
bodies marked with needles & stained with ink? Orosius & Eudore

agree that Scotland & Ireland are inhabited by the same people,  
the latter says Scotland is the same with Ireland but called Scotland  
"because inhabited by Scots." Gildas calls the Scots "savages of  
Ireland".

Bede speaks of the Scots who inhabited Ireland. Cambrensis  
says the Scots came from Ireland. Nennius names the Britons of Ireland  
Scythians & Gildas speaks of the sea from Ireland to England as the  
Scythian (Scythian) Vale.

Alfred who translated Orosius's History  
into Saxon calls the Scots Scyttan. Diodorus Siculus & Strabo  
compare the original Britons of Ireland to the Scythians for their  
brutality.

"Besides the wild Irish the real Scots drink the  
"blood flowing from the wounds of the slain, ratify their covenant  
"by sucking each other's blood & suppose their glory depend upon"  
"the number they have slain; as did the Scythians."



Dear Thelwall

As I understand the impassable state of the road at this inclement time will prevent the forwarding your parcel as usual I will give you a few more extracts from my common place book in the desultory form in which the matter appears. I am confining myself however to the limit you prescribe not to descend later than the 5<sup>th</sup> Century in details true or fabulous on England & the adjacent Islands.

The particulars are principally collected from Gough's Camden & some few from ~~some few~~ from the splendid work of Gibbon at the conclusion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Vol. of the 8<sup>th</sup> edition; if I in mentioning either historians <sup>general</sup> characters, or events, state circumstances too minutely & with which you may have a perfect acquaintance, recollect I am copying from my own minute book written expressly to assist & guide me where I am extremely ignorant.

Gildas the Scottish Monk & Historian flourished in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century he wrote of the miseries of Britain after the departure of the Romans. "there came" says he "in heaps the Carrogges" which transported the inhabitants over the Scitie vale; (Irish Sea) he calls these Carrogges, "swarms of swarthy vermin a horrid crew of Picts & Scots different in manners & united only in atrocity: the inhabitants with an inactive army built high towers, the Carrogges with their machines armed with hooks drag'd the people from their walls, & hurled them to the ground: Want ensuing, pillage & wretchedness was general thro' the land & the enemy took possession of the north part of the Island: in this distress the Britons wrote to the Romans the celebrated letter entitled "The groans of Britain" to Albin 3<sup>rd</sup> time Consul

"The barbarians drive us to the sea the sea to the"  
"barbarians between these two kinds of death we"  
"perish by the sword or water"

The measure of calamity was fill'd up by a famine & a plague the Saxons were afterwards admitted the British some took shelter in the adjacent Islands some in the Mountains of Cimbria & some in Armorica in Gaul where the language resembles the Welsh or Cambrian.

Malmshury says Constantine the Great being Emperor settled the veteran British of his army on the Western Coast of Gaul. Jornandes observes the Emperor Maximian would not discharge the soldiers who followed him from Britain & the author to the notes add this fable. That the Armorican Britons under Maximian the tyrant being prevented from returning ravaged the West of Gaul married the wives & daughters of the natives cut out all their tongues, that the issue might not learn the language of their mothers, whence they are with us called the Dyddion or half silent.

The first mention of the Britons in Armorica was AD 461 about 30 years after the Anglo Saxons were invited into Britain. The Armorica being overcome by the Britons



tradition makes the first owner of the Island a magician who kept it in perpetual mists till St Patrick broke the charm.

St Patrick converted the Island to Christianity AD 440 & then its first Bishop was St German. it is an ancient custom here if a single woman prosecute a bachelor for a rape she has delivered to her by the civil authority a rope a sword & a ring & the choice is given her with these either to hang behead or marry him. The Chronicle of the Kings of Man neither of Camden or of the Cottonian library does not commence until AD 1000 & therefore are inapplicable to your purpose.

It is very probable that much of the information I have here collected will not be applicable to the purpose you have in view & I might have spared myself some trouble had you explained more particularly the kind of intelligence you wanted it has however been some entertainment to me to go over the ground & it gives me pleasure to shew you I am desirous whenever my leisure permits to <sup>afford</sup> ~~give~~ the little assistance I can to you in your pursuits

Yr affly John Dyer Collier

My plan when I began this letter was to confine myself to my Common Place Book which had received much addition on this subject in consequence of your letter having turned my attention to it; the fact is, I have frequently tramped out of my proposed path to give you the value of the times. I mention this to avoid the impression the beginning of my letter might produce that I could have this parade of authorities prepared & cut & dried ready at all times for use which is an affectation I could not bear. Knowing your difficulty in procuring assistances & obtaining means for preference in the orthography of the proper names I have been particularly attentive to the correctness of my female amanuensis, yet I have no doubt many errors will have escaped us & many will have occurred in the sources from which they were taken in a language so little known or rather so utterly unknown as the ancient Erse. I have now had two or three days unoccupied but the cares & anxieties of life rarely admit our time ~~and~~ inclination or capacity for speculative inquiries.



most ancient for they tell us that "Caesarea granddaughter to Noah  
lived here before the flood. Then came Bartholomaeus a Scythian  
300 yrs after yr flood swaged fierce wars with yr giants. Long  
after this Nemetha the Scythian landed & was driven off by  
the giants afterwards Dela with some Greeks made themselves  
masters of the Island then Gaothelus with his wife Scotia daughter  
of Pharaoh arrived at the time the Israelites left Egypt <sup>lastly</sup>  
The sons of Milesius King of Spain led some colonies into the  
Island which had been depopulated by a plague."

According to St Patrick's prediction ~~Bartholomaeus~~ Fergus & his descendants  
became Kings of the whole Country & from his line descended  
Edan the brave son of Gabrain who subdued Scotia where a  
continued series of his posterity reigned. Nennius disciple of  
Elvodigus who fl. in A.D. 830 tells us that the Britons came  
into Britain in the 3<sup>d</sup> age of the World & the Scythians or Scots  
into Ireland in the 4<sup>th</sup> & he proceeds "last of all came the Scots  
"from part of Spain into Ireland 1<sup>st</sup> came Bartholomaeus the  
"Bartholomaeus mentioned before) with 1000 persons of both sex  
"having increased to 4000 they all perished by a mor-  
"tality" He proceeds with another emigration from Spain.

Nennius further says Paladins made no progress in dissemi-  
nating Christianity but that St Patrick was the great Apostle  
of Ireland.

The Monks of Ireland were learned & religious  
in the ensuing age it was called the Country of Saints  
The Bishops were very poor. Columbanus the monk on receiving  
great offers from Sigebert King of the Franks declared "it  
"would ill become him to take the wealth of others who  
"for Christ's sake had renounced his own". Ireland was

the resort of persons desirous of improvement in literature & our Saxon  
ancestors appear to have derived the form of their letters from Ireland  
but their sanctity & erudition were checked by war for A.D. 644  
Egfrid King of Northumbria carried fire & sword into Ireland then in  
alliance with England.

~~Queen~~ A persuasion is rooted in the  
minds of the wild Irish that he who in the loud war who does not  
answer the cry of the rest is suddenly lifted from the ground & carried  
thru' the air into the vallies of Kerry there he lives on grass &  
water deprived of speech but not of reason 'till he be taken by the  
Dogs of the hunters & brought back home.

Strabo speaks  
thus of the Irish "they are more savage than the Britons living on  
"human flesh & eating to great excess. They think it a duty to  
"the bodies of their deceased parents & publicly to lie not only  
"with strange women but even with their mothers & sisters" he  
however expresses his doubt.

Solinus c. 23 says when they gain  
a victory they first drink the blood of the slain & then smear their faces  
with it that a male child is first sed with the point of the fathers  
sword

Isle of Man Ptolomy calls it Monoceda Caesar Monay Pliny Monaca



Mr Pennant could not discover. Here also stands the Chapel of St Bran begun by Columba which the evil spirits would not suffer to stand till some human victim was buried alive which service Bran performed & his red grave stone is near the door.

Near the pebbly beach where Columba landed is the Hill of Angels (Cnoc nan ainigheal) with whom the saint held conference. "It is still a tradition in Icolmkill that he <sup>(Columba)</sup> allowed no women to go there except those devoted to monastic celibacy so that the mechanics employed there were obliged to keep their wives on a little adjoining Island thence called "the Womens Island" (Goughs additions to Camden)

Orkneys (ancient name Mela) I Agriola first discovered & subdued the Orkades. Womnius relates that the Saxons Cotha & Ebifons who served under the Britons sailed with six flat bottomed boats round the Picts & laid waste the Orkades afterwards they became subject to Norway which held them till A.D 1266

Fortunate Islands & Thule. Isaac Tietzes a paddy greek says of Thule thither the souls of the departed are conveyed that this office is done by certain fishermen who live <sup>on the British Island</sup> ~~there~~ who hearing a knocking when they are asleep hasten to the shore where they find ships but not their own & without men they go aboard handle the oars & feel a weight as if full of men but see no one: they come at one stroke to the Island <sup>Thule</sup> when they arrive they still see nobody but hear a voice <sup>18</sup> when the ship is cleared they return home again at one stroke

a poetical geographer mentioned by Mussetus says of Cass that he once visited this Island & was driven off by invisible inhabitants. The poets considered Thule as the remotest part of the world it has attracted much classical notice thus Virgil

"Tibi serviat ultima Thule"

"while utmost Thule shall thy nod obey" alio Seneca

"Terrarum ultima Thule"

"Thule remotest portion of the globe" & Juvenal Claudian

Statius &c. Giraldus says there is no such place to be found: perhaps Schetland may be Thule: some affirm that Ireland is Thule. Ptolemy favors the former opinion by his description <sup>of Schetland</sup> the sea about it is described by Tacitus as "Pigrum et grave remigantibus" & the Roman historians <sup>& Ptolemy</sup> believe in general describe the <sup>British</sup> seas as abounding with Rocks Caverns & Deep Currents & perils of mariners in every horrid form—  
Horace says of the British Seas Betinosus qui remotis  
Obstrepat oceanus Britannis

& Juvenal with his absurd ichthyologic comparison

Quanto delphino balena Britannica major

The navigating our seas was accounted a great achievement.

Ireland This Island is in the Virginian Sea. Orpheus Aristotle & Claudian call it Ierna Juvenal & Mela. Ioverna Plutarch Ogygia & not improperly if the Irish are right (that word signifying



5

"Saxon laws & chronicles & the ecclesiastical tales of the venerable Bede yet he resorts to few others, & he considers the assistance the Saxons met with from Hengist to Ina as more resolute than most other writers. William of Poitiers is the source from which he observes the populousness of Wales has been ascribed to polygamy & that the houses of these licentious barbarians contained ten wives & perhaps fifty children. "Partibus equidem in illis miles unus quinquaginta generat sortitus more" "barbaro denas aut amplius uxores." It is perfectly new to me that polygamy should occasion extensive population.

Scotland [Further particulars]  
When the Scots became possessors of this Country it was divided into seven parts under seven princes

1<sup>st</sup> Enebas & Maern (Angus & Morne)

2<sup>d</sup> Athool & Goverin (Athol & Goverland)

3<sup>d</sup> Stradeern & Meneted (Kathern)

4<sup>th</sup> Forthever

~~5<sup>th</sup> Enebas & Maern (Angus & Morne)~~

5<sup>th</sup> Mar & Buchen (retain their names)

6<sup>th</sup> Muref & Ros (Murray & Ross)

7<sup>th</sup> Cathanes (Cathines) divided by Mount Mound running from the West to the East Sea. The Bishop of Cathnes says the Kingdom was again divided into 7 Territories.

1<sup>st</sup> Tryth (now Sethwaice on the Fae)

2<sup>d</sup> Gilet

3<sup>d</sup> From Gilet to Dec

4<sup>th</sup> From Dec to Spe

5<sup>th</sup> From river Spe to Mount Brun Alban

6<sup>th</sup> Mures & Ros

7<sup>th</sup> Argathel (from Gathelgas their leader)

Christianity was planted about the 2<sup>d</sup> Century here Paladius was the first Bishop appointed AD 431 but Bishops had no regular Dioceses there until the time of Malcolm 3<sup>d</sup> abt AD 1070, altho' Pope Dionisius AD 268 established regular Dioceses elsewhere.

Sever Scottish Islands.

Iona its patron Columba who left Ireland AD 565 in anger vowing never to settle in sight of Ireland so he erected  
heaps of Stones on many hills to look for it  
he first possessed the famous second sight, he died & was buried here  
but his remains were translated to Down in Ireland with those of  
St Bridget & St Patrick

Oran In Iona's  
Reilig Oran or the burying place of ~~ancient~~ where the Kings of ~~Scottish~~  
Scotland Ireland & the Isles were buried containing says the  
chronicle the remains of 48 Scottish monarchs from Fergus  
2<sup>d</sup> to Macbeth

16 of whom were pretended to be of the race of Albin & the tomb was inscribed  
Tumulus regum Scotie another containing  
4 was inscribed Tumulus Regum Hibernie. another with  
8 Norwegian Princes was inscribed Tumulus regum Norwegie who  
were Viceroys to Norway. Where the other 20 were buried